

Pastor's Corner

Dear Friends,

“Grace is alarming. ... Grace isn't fair. [M]ost of us want God's grace for ourselves and God's justice for everyone else.” Rev. Barbara Brown Taylor

Lent. A season of repentance. A time of seeing the ways we miss the mark. But, even more, a time to feel the fullness of God's Grace. For “*while we still were sinners Christ died for us*” (Romans 5:8). That's what gives us hope that on the other side of repentance is forgiveness; on the other side of sorrow is hope; and on the other side of death is resurrection. But what if Barbara Brown Taylor is right? Is it possible that we want Grace for ourselves, but prefer that everyone else receive the punishment they deserve? Do we put a gate around God's Grace and reserve it for those we believe are “truly deserving?” Because that would be none of us. None of us deserves the amazing Grace God gives, but God gives it anyway, in abundance. That means that no matter what we've done (or what we've left undone), *God is good and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love* (Psalm 145:8), if we turn to him for forgiveness and redirection. Yet, I would go a step further and say that God's Grace is at work *even when we don't seek it*. When we won't go to him, I believe God comes to us: nudging us, whispering to us, and (when needed) maybe even shoving us a little—all to help us see how much we need him. And if we receive that kind of Grace, shouldn't we want everybody else to, as well? In the end, I think Taylor is right: Grace *isn't* fair. If it were fair, none of us imperfect beings would receive it. But thanks be to God, who doesn't follow our human ways. Instead, His love is gracious, luxurious, radical. And that's good news for you and for me.

Thank you, Lord, for not following the foolish rules we put in place. Thank you for your surprising mercy and generosity. Forgive us when we want to withhold those things from people around us, and show us the way to a more faithful life. Amen.

Pastor Kara

